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Honors Research Project: A textbook Analysis

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HONORS RESEARCH PROJECT

A Textbook Analysis by Red Barto



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Introduction

History is written by the victor. A popular saying that applies to almost every history textbook here in America. The aim of this paper is to critically examine one such textbook, *The Human Odyssey Volume 3: From Modern Times to Our Contemporary Era*, by Mary Beth Klee, John Cribb, and John Holdren, and examine several factors. This paper will be two-pronged. One part shall examine the textbook as an amalgamation of facts of history and determine if there is any sense of bias, particularly Eurocentrism or Americentrism, as is popular in many textbooks and classes, or other controversial facts or implications. The second part of this paper will look at this book through an educator's lens. How is the readability? Does this book include information suited towards all of the Ohio Social Studies Standards for a world history class? How might this book compare to textbooks of similar topics? All of these trains of thought shall be pursued throughout the course of this paper.

To view this book through the lens of a historian, one must understand that this book is suited towards those with a high-school level reading level. One must understand that this book will not cover every single detail and fact but will rather cover the bigger picture. This is a world history textbook for the minds of children around 14 years of age, and is focused on connecting major themes of the world throughout history to certain events rather than discussing esoteric happenings that, while to historians may serve purpose, would be rather irrelevant in a high school classroom. That all being understood, the analysis can begin.

The Historical Analysis

This historical analysis will be split up into three parts, as the book examines three major eras. The first era the book goes over is from the age of revolutions and imperialism, or the 1800's, up until the first World War. The second era covers the span of time from the start of the First World War through the end of the Second World War. Finally, the last era the book covers is from the end of the Second World War until the present. Each section will be judged on its accuracy (not necessarily on if it covers all of the facts of the era, as this is a simplified text for high schoolers, but rather if the facts are relatively true), and its bias. The bias I speak of, as mentioned earlier, of course is Eurocentrism and Americentrism. According to Merriam-Webster, to be Eurocentric means "reflecting a tendency to interpret the world in terms of European or Anglo-American values and experiences"¹. This definition was used because Merriam-Webster has been a reliable and scholarly source for definitions for many years. In addition, by proxy, this would mean that to be Americentric would be to interpret the world in terms of American values and experiences. In a world history class, it is important to see how events impacted the entire world, rather than just through the eyes of certain Anglo-American nations. However, sometimes there are biases in which people focus on mostly Europe (Eurocentrism), or mostly on America (Americentrism). This sort of thinking can be dangerous when trying to educate children, because it can often lead to the subtle hinting that Europe or America is more important than other countries in the world, and while they might have been more impactful at times, that statement simply isn't true. While it makes sense to look at history through an American viewpoint in the case of a high school class, as a historian it is important to

¹ "Eurocentric." Merriam-Webster. Merriam-Webster. Accessed December 10, 2019. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Eurocentric>.

recognize that, in order to gain an understanding of the history of the entirety of the world, one should not focus on the achievements of one particular nation.

Section One: Age of Revolutions - 1914

Naturally, if one were to talk about the age of revolutions, there are two main ones that would have to be discussed. I talk, of course, about the French Revolution and the American Revolution. These revolutions are important not because of the common Eurocentrism or Americentrism, but rather because, in the case of the French Revolution, France's revolution sparks the beginnings of an era where the monarchy is questioned, and fights break out all across Europe. In the case of the American Revolution, it is because it introduces the origins of a country that would rise to power and have an impact in world politics. However, both of these revolutions are relegated a mere three pages put together. In regard to the French Revolution, the book views it through the eyes of Marquis de Lafayette, and fails to even mention Maximillian Robespierre, a man who was very important in sparking the revolution, as well as partaking in the Committee of Public Safety and running the show during the infamous Reign of Terror. While the information isn't inaccurate, it is very scarce, and skips almost straight to Napoleon. When it comes to the American Revolution, it simply mentions "The American Revolution introduced a daring democratic experiment in government by the people. It also showed the colonies did not have to remain colonies forever, that they might be entitled to independence".² From there it jumps straight to the Industrial Revolution, and, rightfully so, focuses on Britain, as it is traditionally recognized as the first to industrialize.

It then proceeds to focus on Germany rising. This is crucial, as Germany is a key player in both World Wars. It starts with the unification of Germany under Otto Von Bismarck, stating "In the 1860's, Otto von Bismarck rose to power in Prussia, the strongest German state. [He] was

² Mary Beth Klee, John Cribb, John Holdren, *The Human Odyssey: Volume 3*, (Versailles, KY, USA, 2007). 22

determined to forge Germany into a unified nation”.³ Of course, such nationalism is important when setting the stage for World War One. However, the book completely neglects to mention the unification of Italy under figures such as Cavour and Garibaldi, who united Italy prior to Bismarck. The Italian unification is important because it is another example of rising nationalism in the world, and Italy plays major roles in both World Wars and deserves to be at least mentioned.

After that, it seems to focus on the major expansion of Japan. This is, indeed, an important phase in history, as Japan becomes a very powerful player in imperialism and, especially, the Second World War. That’s all very well and good, except the book completely disregards the Berlin Conference when discussing imperialism. It talks about the expansions in Asia, which, admittedly, are important for setting the stage for the world wars. However, the Berlin Conference is almost equally as important, especially when discussing the atrocities committed by King Leopold II in the Congo. Neglecting to talk about this denies Africa any sort of spotlight when it comes to discussing the history of the world of which it is a part of. While Africa might not have been a huge factor in the world wars by today’s standards, the horrific things forced onto the indigenous people are what emphasizes the fact that imperialism is, indeed, a double-edged sword from a global standpoint. It helps European nations gain power, but at the unbearable cost at another group’s expense. While the Opium Wars were, indeed, inhumane tragedies, they don’t quite convey the horrors of imperialism like the scramble for Africa does. The book should at least include how Poland terrorized the Congo to emphasize the downside of imperialism, which is that it often comes at another’s expense. This is where the book stops talking about this era and moves on to the World Wars. Overall, there has been no

³ Ibid., 41

bad information, and with the potential exception of the omission of Africa from the discussion of imperialism, no outstanding Eurocentrism.

Section Two: 1914-1946

When examining this section, it is important to realize that the general focus and setting of the World Wars was, for a majority, Europe and parts of Asia. Many of the key battle in World War One that are discussed were fought in Europe (though there were still battles in Asia and Africa). This, by nature, might lead some to believe that the following is Eurocentric by nature. Accepting this fact allows one to move on with a sense of understanding that Europe was truly the center stage during this era and deserves to be focused on.

There were a few reasons for World War One (WWI). Such reasons include militarism, or the expansion of the nation's armies. This makes sense, because those with larger armies are more inclined to declare and go to war. In addition, there was the concepts of imperialism and nationalism. Radical nationalism, or pride in one's nation, accompanied with the expansion that comes with imperialism, plays a very large factor when Europe goes to war. Finally, we have the concept of alliances. Around this time, many nations had alliances with others, where they agreed to help another nation fight should it have war declared. If enough nations are involved, then one dispute could lead to many nations declaring war. And that's just what happens. The book already, in the previous section, mentions the causes and effects of militarism, nationalism, and imperialism. In this section, the book then proceeds to shed some light on alliances:

“For more than four decades, Europe's industrialized nations had been building their armies and weapons, yet still managed to keep the peace. How did they avoid going to war against each other? In part, through a system of military alliances. Nations entered into agreements with other nations that said, in effect, “If your enemies attack you, I will come to your aid. And if my

enemies attack me, you will come to my aid.” Through such alliances, the European powers hoped to protect themselves and discourage each other from launching a major war”.⁴

The Human Odyssey then proceeds to discuss how all of these things come together and start WWI, starting from the assassination of the archduke Franz Ferdinand and then the following involvement of alliances. It briefly mentions the Habsburg family and empire, who were of extreme importance. However, one could argue that, for a high school student, focusing on the actual countries rather than those who ruled them when discussing this topic would suffice, and so the briefness of this mention is well warranted. When discussing the war itself, the book does an excellent job depicting trench warfare and Germany fighting a war on two fronts. It even goes into more detailed and specific things, such as the Armenian Genocide (Referenced as the Armenian Massacre) and Lawrence of Arabia, things scarcely talked about in many school districts. It then talks about the United States’ involvement in the war vis-a-vis the sinking of the Lusitania. However, it fails to mention the Zimmerman Telegram, which was a failed alliance proposal between Mexico and Germany, which also enticed the United States to go to war. After then focusing on Russia and its revolutions and problems in relation to the war, peace terms are discussed. Of course, the fourteen points by Woodrow Wilson make a debut, and are thoroughly discussed (along with the subsequent redrawing of Europe’s map and the demilitarization and reparations of Germany). The League of Nations, and, in particular its failure, is also a topic of note in the book.

From here, cultural shifts across Europe and in parts of America take the stage. Music, art, and even the economic boom in the 20’s is discussed intensely, warranting their own entire

⁴ Ibid., 78

section. *The Human Odyssey* even touches on the decline of Christianity in the United States, and also the nationalism in the Middle East. The latter of the two topics is exceedingly important, as it serves as a gateway to problems that the world still sees today when talking about conflict in the Middle East. Shedding light on the situation and providing context is key if we are to educate the youth about trying issues such as this.

The final section of this part is setting the context, explaining the events during, and the aftermath of World War Two (WWII). When setting the foundation for the war, all of the major points are discussed. The failing economy globally, the rise of the Soviet Union and Stalin, the emerging fascism in Europe (inspired mostly because of Mussolini, which the book does indeed spend time on), anti-Semitism, and the rise of the Third Reich and re-militarism in Japan and Germany. The book does a particularly good job explaining the policy of appeasement:

“The French and British pursued a policy of *appeasement* - giving in to an aggressor nation’s demands in the hope of preventing war”.⁵

After describing the situation and even quoting Winston Churchill, we then see before us a description of how the policy failed and then directly leads to war. The happenings of the war are then fleshed out. Alliances are listed, events are addressed, and key battles are shown. However, what is glossed over is the copious amounts of wartime propaganda that fueled the fire in the United States. Propaganda, in both the second and the first World Wars, in not only the United States, played a major role, yet the authors don’t do much to describe it. The false allegations of other nations, the bandwagon effect, and the numerous inaccurate rumors are important when discussing how various nations managed to get their public behind the war

⁵ Ibid., 161

effort. In the end, the peace treaty is discussed fairly well, mentioning all of the terms and agreements, as well as the politicians involved in making the decisions, and a nice little summary of the legacy of WWII is included. This last part, among all the others, is particularly imperative because the discussion of history is often rendered obsolete when not coupled with how it has impacted and how it is remembered today.

Section 3: 1946-Present Day

The final section of the book details the happenings after WWII. Of course, one of the most famous and crucial chain of events is the Cold War. With the rise of Communism previously explained, the book does a fairly good job branching off of provided context. Explained and provided is the standoff between the Western and Eastern powers in Europe. The division of Berlin and Germany is brought up, as well as how it devastated the occupants (as it references the Berlin Airlift). The formation of NATO is explained, and the authors even do a good job branching out of Europe into Asia as they describe the reformations in both China and Japan and how Communism affected the two, especially China. Joining the Asian fray in the book is, of course, the war in Korea, as a small sliver is dedicated to sufficiently describing the situation. Revolutions across the board are brought up, particularly in China with the formation of what is now Taiwan, and Cuba. Naturally, the book uses this as a segway to the essential Cuban Missile Crisis. From a historical standpoint, it is good that the book mentions this in particular, because this brings about the concept of mutually assured destruction, which is necessary because it emphasizes just how divided the world was, alongside just how far the conflict due to conflicting ideals had escalated. One thing that is pleasantly surprising is how the book addresses the end of colonialism in Africa. Though, as mentioned before, the imperialism of Africa was glossed over, the end of colonization and its effects are discussed in great detail. It helps draw attention away from Europe and the United States to remind the reader that other countries were involved in the history of the world.

Another thing that this section does very well is talk about the Vietnam War. After discussing how colonialism was ending in many places, such as Africa, great detail goes into how a Communistic Northern Vietnam craved independence from French rule. United States

involvement is discussed, and the spotlight even briefly turns to Cambodia and its struggle with and defeat against the Khmer Rouge.

The Human Odyssey Then details all the factors that led to the fall of Communism. However, it doesn't simply list them. Instead it hints at them; leads the reader to them. The book doesn't simply say "The USSR had a poor economy". Instead it discusses the expenses of the Communist regime. From a historical standpoint, this paints a wonderful mural of the underlying reason that Communism, as it existed, was not and is not feasible. The subsequent dissolve of Communism then shifts to a more relevant and modern problem: Terrorism. It would seem as if it focuses on terrorism in the Middle East, as is popular to do. Radical, militant Islamists are described almost the same way as nationalism was. This makes sense, as nationalism was described as the radical pride in one's nation, and Islamism is described as a radical pride in Islam. From here the limelight shines on primarily the Middle East and the United States' involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. While the information provided rings true, the authors don't seem to address the terrorism going on in Africa or other parts of Asia, such as India. This may be, in part, because the war on terror is fairly large in the United States, but by failing to discuss how global an issue it is, it can lead to the potential ignorance of troubles across the globe and seem almost Americentric.

The very final part of the book discusses the rise of technology in the world, and democracy and other trends in modern day society. This all leads up to, of course, the concept of globalization and the information revolution. Being one of the leading developers of said technology, this again seems to center on the United states and bits of Europe. However, when talking about the worldwide impact, the book still demonstrates how the entire world is affected, and how all nations can now come together. This can be seen in part three, chapter nine when the

book discusses how business is a tool of globalization. On page 351 they discuss cell phones being distributed to Africa and on the following page how Indian employees are trained to speak English. From here, historical knowledge seems to cease as the book then discusses democracy's hold on the world, second wave feminism, and the struggle in the Middle East.

Historical Conclusion

From a historical lens, this is a good, simple textbook. When looking at which parts of history are relevant to a high school student, this book hits almost all the marks. There are times when the book, however, either ignores situations, such as the colonization of Africa, or oversimplifies them, such as, for example, the revolutionary wars in France and the United States in the beginning of the book.

However, the information, even if oversimplified, was accurate, with the exception of some of the “Modern day” information being not quite up to date, as this book was published in 2007. But as far as a historian or social studies teacher should be concerned, there is no bad information in this book, and any holes or gaps can easily be filled in with outside sources.

Educational Analysis

The educational analysis will prove to be shorter than the historic analysis, as instead of rifling through the book's contents and assessing the historical accuracy, this will consider the book as a whole and discuss whether it meets the expectations of the Ohio Social Studies Standards, assess the readability of the book with relativity to the readers, presumably 9th graders, and compare it to other textbooks of similar caliber.

Comparison to OLSSS Standards

Directly pulled from the OLSSS on the Ohio Education website, the following few pages contain themes, topics, and statement standards required by state law for Modern World History as of 2019, the class this book would be best tailored for, for the reader's reference. Once more, these are the official ODE standards for education in social studies, specifically in the area of Modern World History (A link will also be provided in the Bibliography):

Theme: This course examines world events from 1600 to the present. It explores the impact of the democratic and industrial revolutions, the forces that led to world domination by European powers, the wars that changed empires, the ideas that led to independence movements and the effects of global interdependence. The concepts of historical thinking introduced in earlier grades continue to build with students locating and analyzing primary and secondary sources from multiple perspectives to draw conclusions.

TOPIC: HISTORICAL THINKING AND SKILLS

Students apply skills by utilizing a variety of resources to construct theses and support or refute contentions made by others. Alternative explanations of historical events are analyzed and questions of historical inevitability are explored.

CONTENT STATEMENTS:

1. The use of primary and secondary sources of information includes an examination of the credibility of each source.
2. Historians develop theses and use evidence to support or refute positions.
3. Historians analyze cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including multiple causation and long- and short-term causal relations.

TOPIC: AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT (1600-1800)

The Age of Enlightenment developed from the Scientific Revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries. A new focus on reasoning was used to understand social, political and economic institutions.

CONTENT STATEMENTS:

4. The Scientific Revolution impacted religious, political, and cultural institutions by challenging how people viewed the world.

5. Enlightenment ideas regarding human nature and society challenged religious authority, absolute rule and mercantilism.

6. Enlightenment ideas on the relationship of the individual and the government influenced the American and French Revolutions.

TOPIC: AGE OF REVOLUTIONS (1750-1914)

The Age of Revolutions was a period of two world-encompassing and interrelated developments: the democratic revolution and the industrial revolution. Both had political, economic and social consequences on a global scale.

CONTENT STATEMENTS:

7. The American and French Revolutions influenced Latin American revolutions for independence.

8. Industrialization had social, political and economic effects on Western Europe and the world.

TOPIC: IMPERIALISM (1800-1914)

The industrialized nations embarked upon a competition for overseas empires that had profound implications for the entire world. This “new imperialism” focused on the underdeveloped world and led to the domination and exploitation of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

CONTENT STATEMENTS:

9. Imperial expansion had political, economic and social roots.

10. Imperialism involved land acquisition, extraction of raw materials, spread of Western values and direct political control.

11. The consequences of imperialism were viewed differently by the colonizers and the colonized.

TOPIC: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CRISES (1900-1945)

The first half of the 20th century was one of rapid technological advances. It was a period when the tensions between industrialized nations resulted in World War I and set the stage for World War II. While World War II transformed the balance of world power, it was the most destructive and costly war in terms of human casualties and material resources expended.

CONTENT STATEMENTS:

12. Advances in technology, communication and transportation improved lives, but also had negative consequences.

13. The causes of World War I included militarism, imperialism, nationalism and alliances.

14. The consequences of World War I and the worldwide depression set the stage for the Russian Revolution, the rise of totalitarianism, aggressive Axis expansion and the policy of appeasement which in turn led to World War II.

15. Oppression and discrimination resulted in the Armenian Genocide during World War I and the Holocaust during World War II.

16. World War II devastated most of Europe and Asia, led to the occupation of Eastern Europe and Japan, and began the atomic age.

TOPIC: THE COLD WAR (1945-1991)

Conflicting political and economic ideologies after World War II resulted in the Cold War. The Cold War overlapped with the era of decolonization and national liberation.

CONTENT STATEMENTS:

17. The United States and the Soviet Union became superpowers and competed for global influence.
18. Treaties and agreements at the end of World War II changed national boundaries and created multinational organizations.
19. Religious diversity, the end of colonial rule and rising nationalism have led to regional conflicts in the Middle East.
20. Postwar global politics led to the rise of nationalist movements in Africa and Southeast Asia.
21. Political and social struggles have resulted in expanded rights and freedoms for women and indigenous peoples.

TOPIC: GLOBALIZATION (1991-PRESENT)

The global balance of power shifted with the end of the Cold War. Wars, territorial disputes, ethnic and cultural conflicts, acts of terrorism, advances in technology, expansion of human rights, and changes in the global economy present new challenges.

CONTENT STATEMENTS:

22. The break-up of the Soviet Union ended the Cold War and created challenges for its former allies, the former Soviet republics, Europe, the United States and the non-aligned world.
23. Regional and ethnic conflicts in the post-Cold War era have resulted in acts of terrorism, genocide and ethnic cleansing.
24. Political and cultural groups have struggled to achieve self-governance and self-determination.
25. Emerging economic powers and improvements in technology have created a more interdependent global economy.
26. Proliferation of nuclear weapons has created a challenge to world peace.

27. The rapid increase of global population, coupled with an increase in life expectancy and mass migrations have created societal and governmental challenges.

28. Environmental concerns, impacted by population growth and heightened by international competition for the world's energy supplies, have resulted in a new environmental consciousness and a movement for the sustainability of the world's resources.

Topic: Historical Thinking & Skills

This book does not directly address any of the statements belonging to this topic, or rather, it doesn't teach students how to implement these statements, such as critical thinking and source analysis. However, this book does a great job *demonstrating* these statements, and an educator could use it as a tool to teach children these statements. It uses both primary and secondary sources, such as quotes and pictures, and even past editions of *The Human Odyssey*. They use evidence to support the claims of facts, and they also do a fantastic job of analyzing cause and effects while telling the history of the world. An educator would not use this book as a handbook on how to do any of these things, as the instruction for doing so is absent among the pages. However, this would be a fantastic example to have children analyze included primary sources.

Topic: Age of Enlightenment

Unfortunately, the book does not spend long talking about the Enlightenment as we see in the standards. It spends about a grand total of three to four pages in the introduction discussing the Renaissance, and Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke. In addition, though the advancement of science is briefly mentioned in this introduction, the scientific revolution is not specifically mentioned. This book lacks content that addresses the statements where the Enlightenment influenced governmental and religious changes. If an educator were to implement this book in the classroom, they would have to use outside sources to deliver this information.

Topic: Age of Revolutions

This book goes fairly in depth with the French development during this time period, but, as stated before, through the eyes of Lafayette and not particularly France as a whole. The United States gets a brief honorable mention on page 22, and Latin America is not mentioned in the slightest, even though the topic statement specifically talks about how one must teach about Latin America, even if however briefly. However, this book does start to pick up around the 8th content statement, which discusses the Industrial Revolution. The book does an efficient job discussing why Britain launched the Industrial Revolution, and how it impacted society not only in Europe, but the rest of the world as well.

Topic: Imperialism

When it comes to imperialism, the book does a sufficient job conveying the concept and the impacts of colonized nations, even though it doesn't go through many imperialized nations. It uses examples with Asia of the spread of Western culture and how industrialized nations benefited while others were negatively impacted. However, the only real place that the book discusses imperialism is Asia. And so, we end up seeing how imperialized places are often negatively impacted by industrialized nations through the eyes of Asia. Unfortunately, the theme of this topic also addresses Africa and Latin America, and neither of these places are equally talked about. And so, an educator would be able to, very professionally, use this book to explain the concept of imperialism, but would have to use outside sources in order to teach about the colonization of Africa and Latin America.

Topic: Achievement and Crisis

As denoted by the previous historical analysis, about one third of the book is about this era. This book does an amazing job discussing these statements. For the first statement, the book

hints at how technology impacted militaristic might, which is a crucial factor in the World Wars. It also clearly goes over each of the factors that led to the First World War and goes into great detail on how it was fought. The consequences of said war are also discussed, and there is a section completely devoted to Wilson's 14 points for students to directly reference on page 109. Pages 97-102 also describe the Russian Revolutions, and so that statement is covered as well. Even though it's touched briefly, the book also talks about oppressions such as the Armenian Genocide. The impact of the war is explained, and so an educator would have no problem finding all the information they would need in order to teach this section of world history.

Topic: The Cold War

The Human Odyssey spends a lot of time discussing the conflicts in the Middle East and the reasons behind it, and actually spends an entire chapter on it. It especially focuses on the topic of rising nationalism. It should be noted, however, that this chapter is in the middle of the content that addresses the topic of Achievement and Crisis, and so an educator would have to backtrack in the book to reach it. The statement of redrawing the map of Europe is also sufficiently discussed as well and is fairly easy to understand. The fact that the United States and the USSR become superpowers is not directly stated, however this statement can be taught by examining the arms race that the book discusses and the buildup of nuclear weapons. In addition, the competition can further be taught by referencing the book's section on the space race. The conflicts in Korea and Vietnam are also discussed, although they are very spaced apart in the book, as the struggle in Vietnam is discussed when the book talks about colonies gaining independence. The topic of women in the workplace and gaining equality is discussed in the final chapter and gives specific characters and examples of progress with women's rights, including women in the government as well.

Topic: Globalization

The book spends a long time slowly going over the reasons why the USSR fell apart. An educator could easily condense the content and create a list for students to reference when asked the question on an assessment. The book also goes over the concept of terrorism and its underlying causes fairly well, explaining that it has roots in religious conflict. It has a convenient chart that depicts which nations, as was seen in 2007, had their independence and democracy, and spends time talking about how nations such as Iran struggle still. While it is not discussed in this chapter, during the Cold War section, the book does a decent job in trying to emphasize the perils of nuclear warfare. The book's discussion on the Information Revolution does a great job of explaining globalization and global business. Unfortunately, it doesn't speak much to the concept of the environment or overpopulation, and so for the remaining statements an educator would have to rely on an outside source.

Conclusion

From an educator's standpoint, when comparing the book to the OSS standards, this book does not contain everything. However, for the statements it does address, it does a fantastic job explaining them for the most part. What this book is lacking can easily be filled in with the help of outside sources, which is already encouraged among educators, as varying sources help deliver better information and keep classes from getting stale.

Readability, Layout, and Features

While an educated college student or aspiring teacher may be able to easily traverse the pages of this book, we must look at it from the eyes of the students. How would a 9th grade high school student in a Modern World History class look at this? For the answer, we turn to the Common Core standards in Social Studies. On the Core standard website, we can easily find the reading capability goals for all students in grades 9 and 10. One standard of note is CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4, which states that students should be able to:

“Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.”⁶

The book helps with this standard, as it helps students learn to pronounce words (Such as renaissance on page 11) and also provides definitions for key words, which are italicized for emphasis. In addition, after applying the following sample of text to the Linsear Write formula:

“The Second World War would be unlike the first. In World War I, armies had fought for weeks to gain inches of ground on the Western Front. Hitler, who had spent time in the trenches, was determined to avoid that defensive stalemate. The fuhrer had modern tanks, planes, trains, and trucks that could move armies more quickly and with greater firepower than before. The Germans unleashed a new kind of warfare called blitzkrieg (BLITS-kreeg) or "lightning war", which involved surprise attacks and quickly overwhelming the enemy with massive force. The

⁶ Common Core State Initiative. 2019. “English Language Arts Standards>>History/Social Studies Standards>> Grade 9-10.” Last modified 2019. <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/#CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1>

ill-equipped Polish army was the first to experience the speed and surprise of German blitzkrieg.”

We get a grade level of 9.1, meaning it is fit for 9th graders. Some other features that this book includes many easy to read and helpful maps, which is useful for visual learners to learn geography, and small sections of text that help explain relevant information. For example, on page 140, while discussing conflict in the Middle East, there is a sidebar that discusses the relationship between Muslim women and the veils they wear. This draws upon knowledge outside of the main lesson to help students make more connections. They also implement similar things for primary sources, such as Woodrow’s 14 points.

Finally, in terms of the layout of the content, for the most part it is chronologically sound. The only potential fix would be to move the discussion of Vietnam closer to the discussion of Korea so that way students can more easily realize that these were the two main wars during the Cold War, as they will be learning about them, most likely, within the same span of time. Despite that minor edit, however, the layout is simple and easy to understand.

And so, in conclusion, this textbook has the proper readability for the intended students, implements many convenient and helpful features and pictures, and is also organized in an appealing manner, making it an efficient and suitable learning material.

Comparison to Other Sources

Naturally, this is not the only book of world history. A logical question, then, would be how this textbook compares to other published works of its kind. In this section of the textbook analysis, I will be comparing *The Human Odyssey* to the *World History Encyclopedia* and *World History: Connections to Today*. I will be comparing the content, and the readability and format to *The Human Odyssey*.

World History Encyclopedia

Whereas *The Human Odyssey* has three sections that denote the different time periods (Age of Revolution, Crisis and Achievement, and Modern Times), the *World History Encyclopedia*, who's general editors are Alfred J. Andrea and Carolyn Neel, offers several volumes per era. Naturally, for the content comparison, this means that the *World History Encyclopedia* is much more intensive. Simply by opening up to the table of contents, one can clearly see that the *World History Encyclopedia* offers far more information, and this is proven true after reading it. First of all, this book in particular argues that the Age of Revolutions ended in 1914 with WWI. This means that the classic revolutions such as the French and American revolutions are coupled with those that occur during the age of imperialism, such as the French conquest of Vietnam, as depicted on pages 828 in Volume 16, and the First Opium War on pages 824 through 826. In fact, the entirety of Volume 16 is dedicated to the wars during the era. Several other volumes are dedicated to social and cultural customs, economics, politics, and science and technology and the Industrial Revolution. The amount of information in *The Human Odyssey* pales in comparison. However, more content does not necessarily equate to better. It would be very inconvenient to ask students to carry around multiple volumes of the *World History Encyclopedia*, and not all of the content is relevant.

When it comes to readability and format, the *World History Encyclopedia* is formatted just like that. An encyclopedia. Each era is split into several volumes, and each volume discusses different topics. Within each volume is a compilation of related excerpts that relay the information. At the end of each excerpt is the name of its author and a bibliography. The excerpts are also listed alphabetically by category, and not chronologically like *The Human Odyssey*. This means that in order to get the information offered by *The Human Odyssey* from

this encyclopedia, one would have to jump from volume to volume and from page to page, which is excruciatingly inconvenient, despite that gargantuan array of knowledge the encyclopedia possesses. In addition, when it comes to attractiveness, the *World History Encyclopedia* leaves a lot to be desired, as it is essentially wall of text next of wall of text with a few pictures sprinkled in. This adds on to the inefficiency it would have as a classroom learning material. In terms of readability, the following excerpt will be sampled and put to the same test as our original work:

“The Opium War, also known as the First British War, was fought between Great Britain and China after the Qing government sought to curtail the importation and sale of opium in China. The first defeat of China by a European power, the war had far-reaching repercussions. The ensuing Treaty of Nanjing, which forced China to lower its tariffs, cede Hong Kong to the British, and pay a substantial indemnity, was the first unequal treaty imposed on China by a Western power.

The war was the culmination of a series of disputes over trade, especially in opium, between the Qing government and the British going back to 1773, when the British East India Company established a monopoly over opium cultivation in India and began trading it to “country traders” who sold the opium in Guangzhou (the only Chinese port open to Western merchants) in return for silver.”

When the Linsear Write Formula is applied, the returning score is 23.9 in comparison to the 9.1 that *The Human Odyssey* scored. This means it is fit for college students and above. In fact, it is astonishing that Bierce library on the campus of the University of Akron would label it as fit for grades 5-12.

And so, overall, while the content provided in *World History Encyclopedia* might be eons more expansive than that of *The Human Odyssey*, from an educator's perspective, it would just be too impractical to use in the classroom. Its lack of appeal to children of a 9th grader's age, alongside the myriad of volumes one would have to purchase (For over \$2000 for a single set), in addition to the alphabetical organization instead of the convenient chronological organization that a student would learn better by, these volumes are suited more for historians than educators.

World History: Connections to Today

World History: Connections to Today, which will be abbreviated as *Connections* from here on out, is an actual textbook rather than an encyclopedia like the prior connection. It is approximately three times as large as *The Human Odyssey*, and this particular version happens to be the teacher's edition. When comparing content, *Connections* does a much better job providing the context of a world stage. It spends approximately 300 pages discussing the era of prehistory to approximately the 1650's. That's just a bit shy of the entirety of *The Human Odyssey*. In terms of the specific details provided on the topics covered in *The Human Odyssey* by comparison, a lot of the same topics are covered, but in more detail. For example, instead of briefly mentioning the American Revolution as *The Human Odyssey* does, it goes well in depth in a world perspective. This means that it doesn't simply focus on how the separation impacted America, but also the context behind Britain's insatiable taxation and also the lasting effects it had on Great Britain as well. This book does a good job connecting things on a global scale. One of the few things that *Connections* doesn't quite cover as much as *The Human Odyssey*, however, is the specifics of conflict in the Middle East. It does a fair job explaining the larger picture but does not get into as much detail. Overall, when comparing content, *Connections* does a fantastic job providing greater detail while *The Human Odyssey* is more streamlined information that has a few more key focuses than *Connections*.

Format and organization in *Connections* is very similar to that of *The Human Odyssey* because they are both textbooks. There are highlighted and emphasized vocabulary words, pictures and diagrams to help further student understanding, charts for note taking, and connections to primary sources. In addition, it is organized chronologically, similar to *The Human Odyssey*, which makes sense for a textbook.

Finally, when calculating readability, the following passage was used:

“At the head of society were members of the Communist party. Only a small fraction of Soviet citizens was allowed to join the party. Many who did so were motivated by a desire to get ahead, rather than a belief in communist ideology.

The Soviet elite also included industrial managers, military leaders, scientists, and some artists and writers. The elite enjoyed benefits denied to most people. They had the best apartments in the cities and vacation homes in the country. They could shop at special stores for scarce consumer goods. Good shoes, noted one western visitor, distinguished the elite from the common citizen”

The Linsear Write Formula scores this a level of 7.6, which qualifies for 8th grade. In comparison to that of *The Human Odyssey*, it is fairly similar, and quite possibly even preferable, as a lower reading level may provide less of a challenge for many students and can help educators convey information more easily in the classroom.

Overall, *Connections* is fairly on par with *The Human Odyssey*. They both accomplish the transfer of necessary information. If one were to draw a line, one could argue that *Connections* is structured almost like a lecture, while *The Human Odyssey* can be seen as a loose string of interconnected stories that follow countries and figureheads to tell the tale of the human race. Each of these approaches are suitable for the classroom and would mostly depend on the teaching style of the educator.

Comparison to Other Studies

This is surely not the first study of its kind that reviews the alignment of texts to Ohio social studies standards. When writing a paper such as this, it is imperative that one looks at other studies in the field to compare it to in order to find what other scholars have come across and discovered. The two studies that will be examined are *May 4, 1970: How U.S. History Textbooks Portray the Kent State Shootings* by David Lindquist, and also *Selecting Books to Teach the American Revolution: Using a Text Set to Teach ODE Standards* by Terri Socol and Brenda Dales. By examining the content of these papers, we will find how they stand out from this study, and vice versa.

May 4, 1970: How U.S. History Textbooks Portray the Kent State Shootings

The first main difference between this study and the one by David Lindquist is that *May 4* focuses on a specific event in American history, rather than attempting to grasp a broad spectrum of events that impacts the world. In addition, the study focuses on but one standard in the curriculum, “The Kent State shootings are addressed within the general framework of Standard 21 of Ohio’s model curriculum for high school American history, which reads ‘The Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics,’ “⁷. However, similar to this study, Lindquist’s uses page lengths for topics instead of precise word count. In addition, something he does that is absent in this study, as it wasn’t as relevant, is describe how large the pictures are of the various important photographs of the Kent State Shooting. He gives advice to educators, as does this study from time to time, but rather than on whether or not a source can be used reliably in the classroom, Lindquist offers step by step questions and methods to teach a specific lesson. Such a feat would be hard to achieve in this study, as it covers an entire course rather than just a specific event. Overall, this study and Lindquist’s have a healthy dose of similarities and differences due to the nature of the studies, whereas this one covers an entire course in terms of the efficiency of a single text (And then compares it to others), Lindquist sets out to evaluate a specific event through multiple textbooks.

⁷ David Lindquist, *May 4, 1970: How U.S. History Textbooks Portray the Kent State Shootings*, page 1

Selecting Books to Teach the American Revolution: Using a Text Set to Teach ODE Standards

The study by Terri Socol and Brenda Dales appears to be a middle ground of this study and the one previously discussed about the Kent State Shootings by Lindquist. Once more, this study focuses on a single text for an entire course, while Lindquist's examines a single lesson in comparison for a variety of texts. Socol and Dale, however, examine a single topic (instead of a single lesson like Lindquist), the American Revolution, and examine several sources for that lesson. It is more broad than Lindquist, but more specific than this study. Socol and Dale attempt to find which texts would be best suited to teach about the American Revolution in accordance to the 8th grade Ohio Social Studies Standards, the same set of standards used by this study and Lindquist's (albeit not the same social studies subject as this study). It examines the credibility and content of several texts, much like how this study examines the content of the main text and the two comparative texts. In addition, it also provides advice to educators. However, like Lindquist's study, it is very specific advice. Unlike Lindquist's study, it is advice on how to put together a text set, an amalgamation of sources for educators and students to use throughout a lesson in order to effectively learn. Overall, Socol and Dale's study compliments Lindquist's study and this study rather nicely, continuing the theme of examining textbooks in the lens of an educator, but providing something different than both of the other studies.

Conclusion

Overall, *The Human Odyssey* is a good world history textbook from the lens of an educator and a historian. From a historian's viewpoint, it does seem very simplified and lacking. However, this can be attributed to the fact that the target audience is 9th grade high school students. A good history textbook does not overwhelm students with copious amounts of facts. What's more, the book does not seem overtly Eurocentric or Americentric, and does a good job keeping almost all of the world actors present, with the exception of Latin America. In addition, the lack of bias seems to compliment the fact that, while simplified, there's no bad information present from a historian's standpoint. While most likely not a source to be used in educating collegiate level scholars and historians, it does the trick for high schoolers.

From an educator's view, this book also stands firm. The readability is precisely where it needs to be for students that would be taught this content. It also hits on almost all of the standards of Ohio Social Studies, and even the parts that are lacking are still given pretty decent content for the teacher to springboard off of when filling in the information for the students. It is very "user friendly" as it were, boasting a plethora of features to help enhance knowledge, such as sidebar content, primary sources, and easy to read maps and definitions for vocabulary. While it doesn't compare well to an expansive encyclopedia of world history, it does seem similar to other textbooks, such as *World History: Connections to Today* while still keeping its own unique style of using various stories from specific viewpoints to tell the overarching story of humanity, while other books might just list relevant facts and events. Overall, *The Human Odyssey* is a fantastic textbook, and its implementation in class as a supplement to student learning should not be underestimated.

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